

Playing Rio

Rio is a game that is best played by three children. (If there are four players, turns come less frequently, and children will be less active mentally.)

Rio Materials

- twelve tiles (color tiles of one color work well) or squares made with cardboard,
- fifteen transparent chips (five each of three different colors),
- two regular dice

For the table of 4s, for example, we wrote the ten products (4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 40, 44, and 48) on the tiles.

These tiles are scattered in the middle of the table, and each player takes five chips of the same color. The first player rolls the number cube, and if a 5 comes up, for example, he or she puts a chip on the tile marked "20" for 5×4 . The second player then rolls the number cube, and if an 8 comes up, he or she puts a chip on 32 for 8×4 . If the third player rolls a 5, the tile marked "20" already has a chip on it, so the player must take the chip. The third player now has six chips and the first player has four. Play continues in this way, and the person who plays all his or her chips first is the winner. This is a good introductory game, and most third graders begin by using repeated addition rather than multiplication. As they continue to play Rio, finding products when multiplying by 2 and 10 becomes easy. The next products that they master are multiples of 5 and 3. Multiplying by 6, 7, 8, and 9 is much more difficult.

Played frequently, students will become fluent with their facts!